

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 TRSE-00
SSM-03 DOE-12 HA-05 /091 W
-----123516 220933Z /10

O P 220815Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0083
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10958

E.O.11652: GDS
SUBJ: IS, EG, PLO
SUBJ: GAZA MAYOR SHAWWA ON ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS

REF: TEL AVIV 10581

SUMMARY: MAYOR SHAWWA OF GAZA BELIEVES THA REPORTS OF

AN ISRAELI PROPOSAL FOR "AUTONOMY" IN THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES ARE A VERY NAGATIVE SIGN. ALTHOUGH SHAWWA

GAVE NO INDICATION OF ANY CURRENT PLANS TO CONSTITUTE
A NEW PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP, HE SAID THAT THINGS GENERALLY
SEEM TO BE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION AND THAT IT WAS
QUITE POSSIBLE THAT SOME LOCAL LEADERS IN THE TERRITORIES
AND SOME PLO MODERATES MIGHT GO THEIR OWN WAY AND
BECOME THE ACCEPTED LEADERS OF THE PALESTINIANS. SHAWWA
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THREW COLD WATER ON TALK OF 1948 REFUGEES FROM ISRAEL
BEING ABSORBED IN ARAB COUNTRIES AND ON JEWISH SETTLEMENTS
REMAINING AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED LANDS. HE
SAID SADAT KNOWINGLY RECEIVED A DELEGATION OF DISCREDITED
GAZANS IN ORDER TO IMPRESS THE EGYPTIANS WITH HIS PALESTINIAN
SUPPORT. THE MAYOR WAS COMPLIMENTARY OF AMERICAN EVENHAND-
OADNESS DURING THE CURRENT INITIATIVES. END SUMMARY

1. EMBOFFS HAD AN LENGTHY SESSION AT MAYOR SHAWWA'S HOME EVENING OF DECEMBER 20, ALONG WITH LARRY FABIAN OF CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT WHO HAD ARRIVED LATE FOR AN EARLIER SCHEDULED MEETING.

2. SHAWWA CONTINUED TO BE CRITICAL (REFTEL) OF BEGIN'S AUTONOMY PLAN FOR THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AS IT HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS. IF SUCH A PROPOSAL IS INDEED WHAT THE ISRAELIS ARE OFFERING, SHAWWA SAID, THIS IS A VERY NEGATIVE SIGN. HE ADDED THAT NO ARAB STATE WOULD BE ABLE TO ACCEPT IT; THAT EVEN IF ALL OF THEM DID--WHICH THEY WOULD NOT--THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WOULD REMAIN; AND THAT IF EGYPT WERE TO ACCEPT SUCH AN IDEA, IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO STAND ALONE, NO MATTER HOW STRONG IT IS IN THE ARAB WORLD. TURNING TO PROPOSITION AROUND, SHAWWA ASSERTED THAT IF THE ISRAELIS WERE TO GRANT THE PEOPLE OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES THEIR MINIMUM DEMANDS (COMMENT: HE BRUSHED ASIDE ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN "DESIRABLE" AND "ATTAINABLE" GOALS), VIZ, COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORIES CAPTURED IN 1967 AND THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH A PALESTINIAN STATE, THEN THE ARAB STATES WOULD HAVE NO BASIS UPON WHICH TO CONTINUE THEIR STRUGGLE WITH ISRAEL. SHAWWA SAW NO PROBLEM WITH A 5-YEAR INTERIM UN ADMINISTRATION AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

3. SHAWWA SAID THAT IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT A NEW PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP MIGHT EMERGE FROM A SPLINTERED PLO AND FROM LOCAL LEADERS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ON THE BROAD SCALE, HE
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SAID, THINGS SEEM TO BE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION. (COMMENT: SHAWWA DID NOT LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WERE ANY CURRENT EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO ESTABLISH SUCH A NEW LEADERSHIP OR THAT HE HAD THOUGHT IN OTHER THAN A GENERAL WAY OF HOW IT MIGHT BE DONE.) IF THE PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORIES ARE OFFERED THEIR STATE, THEY WILL TURN THEIR BACKS ERN THE PLO, SHAWWA EMPHASIZED. "WE HAD TO TURN TO THEM BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ONE 'INSIDE' PERMIT-

TED TO SPEAK FOR US, BUT WE WOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE OUR STATE TO TRY AND DESTROY ISRAEL."

4. ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE ISRAELI SUGGESTION THAT MOST OF THE ARAB REFUGEES FROM 1948 SHOULD BE ABSORBED WHERE THEY ARE LIVING, THE MAYOR SHOT BACK THAT THE ARAB STATES WOULD NEVER ACCEPT THIS. HE RELATED A COMMENT SADAT HAD MADE TO A

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O P 220815Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10958

VISITING DELEGATION SIX WEEKS AGO THAT THERE SHOULD NO LONGER BE "AN EGYPTIAN RAFAH AND A PALESTINIAN RAFAH." (THE 1948 LINE RAN THROUGH RAFAH.) THE MAYOR SPECULATED THAT PERHAPS SADAT HAD PLANS THAT ARAB REFUGEES WOULD SETTLE IN THE AREA BETWEEN AL ARISH AND THE GAZA STRIP.

5. SHAWWA WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY JEWISH SETTLEMENTS REMAINING IN ARAB LAND AFTER AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. EZER WEIZMAN HAD ASKED HIM ABOUT THIS RECENTLY, AND HE HAD RESPONDED OFFHAND THAT IT WOULD BE ALLRIGHT IF ARABS WERE PERMITTED TO ESTABLISH SETTLEMENTS IN ISRAEL. NOW BEGIN IS SAYING ARABS CAN LIVE IN ISRAEL, SHAWWA NOTED WRONGLY, BUT OF COURSE, HE SAID, WE DO NOT HAVE THE WHEREWITHAL TO MATCH ISRAELI SETTLEMENT EFFORTS AND BEGIN IS JUST MAKING PROPAGANDA.

6. GAZA CITY MANAGER ISAM SHAWWA TAGGED SADAT FOR RECEIVING THE GAZA DELEGATION LED BY SHEIKH HISHAM KHAZINDAR (WHOSE SON HE SAID IS IN AN ISRAELI JAIL FOR POLITICAL REASONS), AND MADE
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UP MOSTLY OF FORMER EGYPTIAN EMPLOYEES INTERESTED IN COLLECTING BACK PAY. BOTH THE GAZA DELEGATION AND THOSE ASSEMBLED ON THE WEST BANK WERE ORGANIZED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE ISRAELIS, SHAWWA SAID. THE MAYOR SAID SADAT KNEW VERY WELL THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE DISCREDITED BUT THAT HE WANTED TO HAVE SOME PALESTINIANS TO EXHIBIT TO THE EGYPTIANS AS HIS SUPPORT. ISAM

SHAWWA ADDED THAT DAYAN PERSONALLY HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO COAX THE MAYOR, OR EVEN ISAM, INTO MEETING SADAT IN JERUSALEM.

7. SHAWWA DISCOUNTED STORIES OF PRESSURES ON KING HUSSEIN FROM HIS BROTHER AND UNCLE TO PLAY A PASSIVE ROLE RE THE WEST BANK. HUSSEIN'S BASIC UNDERSTANDING, ACCORDING TO THE MAYOR, IS THAT THE WEST BANK CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT JORDAN AND THAT IT MUST MOVE TOWARDS HIM, WILLINGLY OR NOT. AS FOR THOSE IN THE TERRITORIES "WHO COUNT," THEY WILL CONTINUE TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES BEFORE MAKING A MOVE. RE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS, SHAWWA PREDICTED THAT THEY WOULD INEVITABLY IMPROVE: IF SADAT FAILS, EGYPT WILL HAVE TO MOVE CLOSER TO SYRIA AND IF HE WINS, SYRIA CANNOT REMAIN ISOLATED.

8. THE MAYOR WAS COMPLIMENTARY OF THE EVENHANDED MANNER THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS SHOWN DURING THE CURRENT INITIATIVES. HIS ONLY CAVEAT WAS THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO GIVE UNQUALIFIED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT TO ISRAEL WHICH ENABLED IT TO REMAIN STUBBORN AND EVEN TO THWART AMERICAN INTERESTS.

9. COMMENT: THE MAYOR SEES AUTONOMY AS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND PERPETUATION OF THE STATUS QUO. HE IS SKEPTICAL, BASED ON HIS ADMITTEDLY INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF BEHIND THE SCENES MANEUVERS, THAT PEACE WILL COME SOON. BUT HE HOPES THAT MIRACULOUSLY IT MIGHT. THIS WAS WELL ILLUSTRATED BY THE NEWS IN MID-CONVERSATION THAT WEIZMAN HAD MADE A SURPRISE VISIT TO ALEXANDRIA: THE PREPONDERANCE OF CRITICISM
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AND SUSPICION LIFTED MOMENTARILY, THEN RESUMED.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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